

Biography

A DEVOTED DOCTOR

SIR JAMES CANTLIE'S AMBULANCE WORK

SIR JAMES CANTLIE. By NEIL CANTLIE and GEORGE SEAVER.
John Murray. 10s. 6d.

"Of the good men I have met with in my journey through life there has been none who sought so steadfastly as he to improve the conditions of human life, and none so ready to sacrifice self for this end." So writes Sir Arthur Keith in his introduction to this biography of James Cantlie, and the sentence at once explains and justifies the publication of the story. Cantlie was not a discoverer in medicine; nor yet a great surgeon: but he was a notable contributor to the application of medical knowledge to the relief of human suffering, and no small part of the humanitarian organizations during the War was a direct result of his clear-sighted and persevering devotion to practical ends. He achieved his success by his power of clear definition of his end and thereafter by the persevering application of all the means which his striking personality gave to his hand. He owed much to the general conviction of his complete lack of self-interest, and his readiness to shoulder both moral and financial responsibility. In this last respect he was almost reckless and spent his own money lavishly in support of the causes which he had adopted.

The story, written partly by one of his sons, tells in the first chapters of his parentage and boyhood in Banffshire, and then passes to the London of the late seventies and early eighties. For fifteen years of that period Cantlie was a prominent figure among the younger medical men attached to the medical school of Charing Cross Hospital, and seemed at one time to be marked out for success as a surgical consultant. His devotion, however, to civilian ambulance work and to the organization of first-aid units overshadowed the more purely professional side of his work, and at the end of these years he felt that he had not received the recognition which was his due. He therefore abandoned his prospects in London and spent the next eight years of his life in Hong-kong. There, as elsewhere, he not only led an active professional life but was the leader in every scheme of public welfare. However, an energetic life in the tropics sapped his energy and in 1896, at the age of forty-five, he returned to England. Back in London and restored to health, his restless energy led him to the study and advancement of tropical medicine and to his earlier ambition of establishing an efficient ambulance service. In both these spheres he led the way for his generation, so that at the outbreak of the War the efficient organization of the voluntary ambulance services was due mainly to his efforts and those of his wife. Recognition came to him in 1917, and then slowly his magnificent constitution began to fail. His wife's death in 1922 was soon followed by the failure of the College of Ambulance, to which he had given much of his best work, and in the three years which remained to him he was an exhausted and failing man.

The story, as Sir Arthur Keith says, will give future generations some idea of the best type of Briton of the closing years of the Victorian era; a type which in its devotion to duty, its energy and its patriotism has never been surpassed in the longer chapter of British history

in the Navy early in the last century with the introduction of steam propulsion for ships. His intellect appreciated the great interest of that process and he threw all his vigour and abilities into forwarding it, as the best contribution he could make to enhancing the power of the great Service to which he belonged. As experimental officer of the gunnery school, as Director of Naval Ordnance and as Controller of the Navy, he was for many years particularly identified with the technical development of weapons; and it may have been this phase of his experience which accounted for a certain tendency to give undue—or at least unconfirmed—weight to the effects to be expected from an enemy's weapons. The impartial biographer, when he arrives, will perhaps conclude that this tendency illustrates the respect in which Jellicoe failed to reach the Nelson standard.

His present biographer makes no attempt at impartiality. There were many controversies, mostly concerned with technical matters, in the Navy during Jellicoe's service, in which he was inevitably involved; and others—largely concerned with his own part in the War—after he retired from active naval service. Captain Altham has strong views on many of the former and no hesitation in expressing them. Indeed, his fault as a biographer is a tendency at times to make his hero's career a peg on which to hang his own confident pronouncements upon highly controversial issues. In the later controversies he is an uncompromising partisan, though not always completely convincing. In the account of the Battle of Jutland, for instance, he states that "there can be no doubt that serious casualties to our battleships were prevented by Jellicoe's prompt turn away"; but since "20 or more" of the 32 German torpedoes fired reached the British line despite the turn away, the justification for the statement is not immediately apparent. On the whole, however, the account of the battle, though necessarily in a book of this size severely condensed, is clear and easily followed.

OTHER NEW

ANTHOLOGY

PRISON ANTHOLOGY. Edited by A. G. STOCK and REGINALD REYNOLDS. Jarrolds. 12s. 6d.

This is a collection (which is the subject of further comment in a leading article) of writings, believed to have been composed in prison, by authors ranging from the Prophet Jeremiah to Sacco and Vanzetti, and from St. Paul to the militant suffragettes. As is to be expected, since literacy is required for inclusion, they are nearly all political prisoners, and the left wing has a great preponderance over the right—though Mary Stuart, Raleigh and Strafford find places alongside Wolfe Tone, Mahatma Gandhi and Herr Ernst Toller.

Speeches from the dock or scaffold are admitted, as presumably composed in gaol, and this brings in the self-justifications of Lilburne, John Brown and Dimitrov, though not the Apology of Socrates. The whole collection suggests that writings within the definition extend over almost as wide a range as literature itself.

In an introduction the editors give an account of their principles of selection, which shows how far they have been from exhausting a very rich field. They open up also some stimulating lines of speculation, such as the idea that the imprisonment of the body may sometimes be the condition of the liberation of the spirit (T. E. Lawrence used occasionally to talk in this vein), and the curious notion contained in the following paragraph:—

Prison is the symbol of European government and one of the two symbols of Western civilization. When the British founded their settlement at Madras the first public buildings which they erected were two churches (Catholic and Protestant) and "a prison for debtors." Thus were Church and State represented; and it will be noted as symbolic too that those who could not worship God in the same place made no such distinction in the honours they paid to Mammon.

ENGINEERING

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE STEAM



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modest. It is true that, deliberately confining

and shrubs as his "first choice," assuming that his readers have no plants at all to begin with and know nothing about them. Later in the book he gives second and third lists to be planted as the garden grows, and finally he plunges into the welter of cultivated species, selecting and describing his preferences and giving hints on their culture.

It is unfortunate that no author on gardening at the present time seems to be able to resist the temptation of giving advice on the design and construction of the garden. Mr. Stevens is no exception. Early in the book we are told that "a rockery is just a mound of earth with stones pushed deeply into its surface" and that blocks of broken concrete will be cheaper than stone and "look just as well as pure white rock." That such advice can be published in this country in all seriousness is a matter of astonishment and one could wish that Mr. Stevens had kept to his subject of trees and shrubs (on which he is quite sound).

HISTORY

THE BOOK OF DUNVEGAN. Edited by R. C. MACLEOD OF MACLEOD. Vol. I, 1340-1700. Aberdeen: Spalding Club.

The arrangement of these documents and their preparation for publication was the work of the late Canon R. C. MacLeod of MacLeod, and was a labour of love most diligently and competently performed. The documents down to 1700 are now published by the Spalding Club with a preface on the architectural history of Dunvegan Castle by W. Douglas Simpson, the club editor, which is excellently illustrated with photographs and diagrams. Another volume, containing documents from the beginning of the eighteenth century, and an index of the whole, is in preparation.

The material published consists of charters, sasines, marriage contracts, tacks, mortgages, rent rolls, bills, discharges, letters, &c., connected with the MacLeod family down to the end of the seventeenth century. With these documents we can trace the vicissitudes in the fortunes of the MacLeod family through many troubled years, and their successful resistance to the attempted encroachments of Frasers and Campbells. They show that there was apparently never a time when the affairs of Highland lairds were not complicated and involved, their debts large and taxation heavy. Many personal references of interest are to be found in these papers, such as the unsuccessful attempt of MacLeod's duns to collect a debt from MacNeil of Barra in 1679, and the letter from Rorie, son of John MacLeod of MacLeod, from college at Edinburgh in 1690. It is rather surprising that in all the MacLeod papers which Canon MacLeod examined and arranged not one in Gaelic has been found.

There are obvious misprints of dates on pages 90 and 93, and on page 119 the comma after "Neyn" should be omitted; "Cristine daughter of John son of James" is the meaning. A number of the Gaelic personal names have been wrongly transcribed from the original documents, e.g., "Tan" for "Ian," on page 181, and (probably) McFoirll for McHoirll (Mac Shomhairle), page 118. These are minor errors. This is certainly a book every one interested in Highland history should possess; it is undoubtedly one of the most important publications of its kind.

MEDICAL

MY TESTAMENT OF HEALING. By